

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, MARR, JA
SUBJECT: KURISU EXUDES RESPONSIBILITY IN POST-DISMISSAL
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

REF: (A) TOKYO 13490, (B) TOKYO 13895

1. FORMER JDA JOINT STAFF COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HIROOMI
KURISU'S REMARKS TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' CLUB LUNCHEON
AUGUST 23, HIS FIRST MAJOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE HIS
DISMISSAL ONEMONTH AGO, WERE MARKED BY MORE CAUTION
THAN OUTSPOKEN GENERAL HAD BEEN KNOWN FOR WHILE IN
UNIFORM. AUDIENCE, OBVIOUSLY ANTICIPATING SOME SIGN
OF BITTERNESS FROM KURISU OVER HIS DISMISSAL, HAD TO
SETTLE FOR BLAND REHASH OF HIS CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS
AND SOME SKILLFUL SIDESTEPPING OF THEIR MORE POINTED
QUESTIONS.

2. KURISU'S APPEARANCE CAME AT TIME OF CONTINUING HIGH
INTEREST IN DEFENSE MATTERS IN JAPAN, CENTERING AROUND
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INADEQUACY OF PRESENT SDF LAW IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY
(REFS A, B AND SEPTTEL TO FOLLOW). IN PREPARED REMARKS
KURISU SAID SDF WAS LIKE "SCULPTURED BUDDHA WITHOUT
SPIRIT, BECAUSE CREATOR HAS FORGOTTEN TO PUT IT IN,"
BUT WAS CAREFUL TO MAKE POINT THAT HE WAS NOT CRITICIZ-
ING GOJ OR TRYING TO FAN DEBATE. HIS PURPOSE WAS ONLY
TO CALL ATTENTION TO GAP IN EXISTING LEGISLATION.

3. IN REBUTTING SOME OF MORE OFT-HEARD CRITICISMS, KURISU EMPHASIZED THAT LEGISLATION COVERING DEFENSE EMERGENCIES COULD NOT BE USED ASPRETEXT TO EXPAND LOCAL INCIDENT BEYOND JAPAN'S BORDERS; THAT WORST-CASE PLANNING WAS NEEDED; AND THAT MILITARY WOULD NOT BECOME POLITICAL. HE DENIED THAT PERSONAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS WERE BEHIND CONTROVERSY, AND NOTED HE HAD HAD ONLY ONE AND ONE-HALF YEARS MORE UNTIL RETIREMENT AT TIME OF HIS DISMISSAL.

4. DURING Q & A SESSION, KURISU REPEATEDLY DECLINED TO BE COAXED ONTO THIN ICE BY PRESS CORPS. HE STATED THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING NATIONAL DEFENSE NOT THROUGH GREATER MILITARY ROLE OR CAPABILITY BUT THROUGH IMPROVED MORALE, AND THAT HIS "RESIGNATION" WAS RESULT OF JDA DIRGEN KANEMARU'S HAVING LOST TRUST IN HIM, RATHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC EVENTS. ASKEDABOUT REPORTED COMPARISON WITH GEN. SINGLAUB CASE, HE SUGGESTED WITH SMILE THAT COMPARISON WITH GEN. MACARTHUR MIGHT BE MORE APT. (MORE SERIOUSLY, HE POINTED OUT THAT GEN. SINGLAUB WAS CONCERNED WITH A THREAT ON FOREIGN (TO US)SOIL, WHEREAS HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT DEFENDING JAPAN AGAINST AN AGGRESSOR.) KURISU ALSO NOTED THAT AS SE ASIA HAD DECLINED IN US LIST OF PRIORITIES, IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN TO US SECURITY SHOULD RECEIVE GREATER EMPHASIS. HE LATER ADDED THAT HE WAS IN FAVOR OF JAPAN'S ASSUMING A GREATER SHARE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFENSE BURDEN WITHIN JAPAN. ONLY SLIGHTLY OFF-NOTE, WHICH PRESS THUS FAR HAS FAILED TO REPORT, WAS HIS RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER HE AGREED WITH JAPAN'S THREE NUCLEAR PRINCIPLES: KURISU REPLIED OBLIQUELY BY STATING THAT WHATEVER VIEWS HE HAD ON SUBJECT WERE GIVEN WHILE IN UNIFORM, THROUGH APPROPRIATE CHANNELS.

5. ALL MAJOR PAPERS COVERED KURISU'SDEFENSE OF REMARKS THAT LED TO HIS DISMISSAL, INDICATING THAT HE IS STILL VERY MUCH A CELEBRITY IN JAPAN. JDA OFFICIAL WHO IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN STUDY OF LEGISLATION FOR DEFENSE EMERGENCIES CONFIDED TO EMBOFF THAT PEOPLE WHO KNOW KURISU DID NOT FEEL THAT HE HAD POLITICAL AMBITIONS--IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION HE EXPLICITLY DENIED ANY--BUT THAT HIS FAME MIGHT LEAD OTHERS TO PUSH HIM INTO POLITICS WITHIN TWO OR THREE YEARS.

6. BY IRONIC COINCIDENCE, DAY OF KURISU'S APPEARANCE, PRESS REPORTED REMARKS BY MSDF CHIEFOF STAFF TAKEDA AT PRESS CONFERENCE HELD PREVIOUS DAY WHICH LARGELY ECHOED THOSE WHICH LANDED HIS FORMER BOSS IN SO MUCH HOT WATER. MANSFIELD

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